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ABSTRACT

This report presents a pilot study which collected preadolescents' retrospective reports of their preschool experiences with the television program, "Sesame Street." One-hundred-five fifth and sixth graders ranging from 9 to 12 years of age were asked to think back to when they viewed "Sesame Street" in their younger years and to respond to questions concerning their recall and understanding of program segments, characters, and settings. Further, subjects were interviewed about their preschool viewing habits, identification with characters, perceived value of "Sesame Street," and current opinion of the show. Results are discussed in terms of the following: preschool viewing habits; motivation for viewing "Sesame Street;" frequency of viewing the show; recall of the program's content, segments, characters, and set; pacing of segments; identification with characters; the reality of the street and its people; the influence of the program on subjects' role and imaginative play; the prosocial and academic values of the program; parental involvement in the viewing of "Sesame Street;" viewing and discussing the program with others; comparison of "Sesame Street" with other children's programs; and current opinion of the show. It was concluded that "Sesame Street" clearly had played a role in the subjects' lives -- a role that they recalled mostly with pleasure and fondness. Copies of the interview form used, the explanatory letter sent to subjects' parents, and the code sheet used are appended. (Author/MP)

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CHILDREN'S RECOLLECTIONS OF SESAME STREET

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January, 1982

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CHILDREN'S RECOLLECTIONS OF SESAME STREET

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SUMMARY

How do 9 - 12 year olds remember their viewing of Sesame Street when they were preschoolers? We interviewed 105 fifth and sixth graders in Arlington, Massachusetts:

- All recalled having seen Sesame Street; 89% reported viewing "everyday," 11% estimated 2-3 times per week.
- All recalled having enjoyed watching it.
- When asked what they "remember about Sesame Street," they mentioned several aspects of the program. Characters were noted in 52% of all the responses, academic aspects in 28%, activities in 7%, affective involvement, 6%, segment formats, 4%, street setting, 2%, and other elements, 1%.
- On the average, each child recalled five Sesame Street characters; the muppets were especially memorable to them, with Big Bird mentioned by 89%, Bert and Ernie by 72%.
- Our students were aware of the different races and genders of characters on Sesame Street -- both muppets and people -- but recalled the characters more for what they did rather than for what they looked like.
- One-half of our 9-12's recollected playing pretend and commercial games which were based on the program and its characters.
- A majority of the children recalled the street scene as being realistic and the people as true to life.
- 88% believed that Sesame Street had taught them good ways to treat people; 85% believed that it helped to prepare them for school.
- Approximately three-quarters of our group reported recognizing various differences between Sesame Street and other children's programs that they had viewed as preschoolers.
- A majority recalled being encouraged by their parents to watch Sesame Street and watched either with their parents, grandparents, siblings, or friends.
- Our 9-12 year olds stopped watching Sesame Street when they reached first or second grade. But most of them (76%) now have younger siblings, and 92% of those who do, report that they watch Sesame Street with them.

We recognize the obvious biases in this type of study. For example, it was clear to the children we interviewed that we had a special interest in their memories of Sesame Street viewing, and children often give answers that they expect will please adults. Also, their reported memories are mixed with impressions from occasional current viewing of Sesame Street, especially for the 76% who now have younger siblings at home. Further, we acknowledge that recollections of childhood experiences are reconstructions based on fragmented early images of the program.

However, our 9-12 year olds clearly indicated that Sesame Street had played a role in their lives, a role that they recall mostly with pleasure and fondness.

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This report presents a pilot study which collected preadolescents' retrospective reports of their preschool experiences with Sesame Street. Fifth and sixth graders were asked to think back to when they viewed Sesame Street in their younger years and respond to questions concerning their recall and understanding of program segments, characters, and setting. Further, they were interviewed about their preschool viewing habits, identification with characters, perceived value of Sesame Street, and their current opinion of the show. Through these recollections, we intend to explore the salient long-lasting impressions of Sesame Street for the preadolescent who viewed as a preschooler.

Since retrospective data are susceptible to several sources of bias, we will review the small amount of literature on childhood memories in order to better evaluate the meaning of our children's recollections. One does not recall literal replications of complex events; "remembering appears to be far more decisively an affair of construction rather than one of mere reproduction. . . . Condensation, elaboration, and invention are common features of ordinary remembering. . . ." (Bartlett, 1932, p. 205). We remember the gist of meaningful experiences and some bits and pieces of verbal or visual detail from which we reconstruct portraits of events (Harris & Monaco, 1978; Loftus & Loftus, 1976). Recall of memories before age five (when most of our subjects would have viewed Sesame Street) may be particularly difficult. In extreme form, this phenomenon is referred to as childhood amnesia.

Researchers have proposed several hypotheses that may account for the difficulty in retrieving early memories. White and Pillemer's (1979)

extensive analysis of these theories favors an interpretation based on Pascual-Leone's model of cognitive processing: in essence, preschoolers encode or represent complex events in memory in such a way that they are accessible only through situational or affective cues. As children grow older, their retrieval strategies change in such a way that the earlier memories are no longer easily accessible because of the original storage method, consequently the term "amnesia."

If images and fragments of early events are accessed successfully after age five (or thereabouts), the older person reconstructs the memory by employing his or her presently advanced cognitive operations and more sophisticated grasp of language and behavior. Because of developmental changes intervening between the original event and the later recollection of that event, the recalled memories take on a new form and a new significance. Thus, when we ask our preadolescents to recall their preschool experience with Sesame Street, the responses are reconstructed narratives based on memory traces which are reinterpreted according to the children's present developmental level. This is exemplified in the following transcribed interview in which a student remembers a "Cry Wolf" story from Sesame Street:

> Interviewer: "Do you remember any parts of Sesame Street?"
>
> Female student, 11 years: "I remember when they were all in the village and this kid [who was to protect a plate of cookies] yelled, 'Cookie!', cause they was expecting Cookie Monster. The kid yelled, 'Cookie Monster, the Cookie Monster' and everybody ran and no one was there and he goes, he was only kidding. And he did it another time, and he was only kidding. Then he did it and it was for real and no one came out and the cookies got stolen."

Interviewer: "What do you think they were trying to teach through this part?"

Student: "Don't lie."

It appears that our preadolescent had stored in memory vivid verbal and visual details from early viewings of Sesame Street, but her reconstruction in narrative form indicates an understanding of plot development and cause/effect relations that are not typical of three to five year olds (Flapan, 1968; Leifer, Collins, Gross, Taylor, Andres, & Blackmer, 1971). The level of moral interpretation is also the response of a preadolescent, not a preschooler (Kohlberg, 1969). Thus, the recollections of Sesame Street are not equivalent to the early experiences, but there are correspondences between the two phenomena.

In addition to recognizing that preadolescent recollections are higher level reconstructions, we must realize that many preadolescents occasionally viewed Sesame Street beyond age five and may even have viewed it within the last year. For example, one student told us: "Now when I flip the channel, I watch for a little while and I see they have this new thing. It's like a pinball machine and it counts up the numbers, 12 and stuff." Consequently, some of our sample's recollections (we cannot know to what extent) come from memories of viewing after the preschool years.

One study which evaluated the retrospective method provides us with two more cautions to consider when reviewing our recollection data (Yarrow, Campbell, & Burton, 1970). Yarrow et al. compared contemporaneous records of early developmental events in a child's life with sets of mother and child recollections of the earlier times. Two of their conclusions pertain to our pilot study. First, both mothers and children

tended to recall the past in a more favorable light than was indicated by the earlier reports. A desire to please the interviewer may lead to selective reporting of memories. Secondly, children's recall of early events correlated more strongly with the mother's recollection than with the historical data, reflecting the role of "family folklore" in defining children's recall. Indeed, one of our students explicitly demonstrated the latter observation by saying: "My mother tells me I used to act like Cookie Monster when I ate cookies, gobbling them down."

In summary, our analysis of the literature on retrospective memory yields four general caveats to keep in mind as we review our preadolescents' recollections of Sesame Street. First, recall of past events involves reconstruction employing presently available cognitive operations. Second, our subjects will most likely have been exposed to Sesame Street both after the preschool years and possibly in recent times. Third, the past tends to be viewed more favorably in recollections reported in interview situations; and fourth, childhood memories are often influenced by family folklore.

METHOD

Subjects

A total of 105 children from nine to twelve years of age volunteered from fifth and sixth grade classes in five schools in the predominantly white, mixed SES, city of Arlington, Massachusetts. This age group was chosen for this pilot retrospective study because we were certain that the children had had access to Sesame Street in 1971-1976 when they were three to five years old.

Materials

An interview questionnaire was designed to elicit a range of information about children's recall of Sesame Street:

1. Pre-school viewing habits (see questions 1 and 2 in Appendix A);
2. General recall of Sesame Street affect and content (3,4);
3. Motivation for viewing Sesame Street (5);
4. Frequency of viewing (6);
5. Specific recall of segments and characters (7,8), and in particular, recall of female (9) and minority group characters (i.e., Blacks, Hispanics, Native Americans and the handicapped) (10,11);
6. Identification with characters and role modeling (12,13);
7. Role playing (13);
8. Imaginative play (14);
9. General recall of the street and set (14a);
10. Sense of realness of the street and the people (14b,15,16);
11. Prosocial and academic value of Sesame Street as perceived by the subjects (17,21);

12. Pacing of segments (18a,18b);
13. Parental involvement in Sesame Street experience (19a);
14. Viewing and discussion of Sesame Street with others, both as a preschooler and as an older child (19b,23);
15. Comparison of Sesame Street with Misterogers' Neighborhood, Captain Kangaroo and cartoons (20);
16. Current opinion of the show (22).

These questions were open-ended to encourage spontaneous and unconstrained recall. However, probe questions were added in order to elicit more specific information about each topic. For example, question 12 examines the child's recall of identifying with Sesame Street characters: "When you were 4 or 5, did you ever want to be like someone on Sesame Street?" If the child answered "yes," then the interviewer continued to probe into why the child chose that particular character, asking about the characteristics or activities of that character that appealed to the child. If the child answered "no" to the original question, then the interviewer placed the child in a forced-choice position by asking him or her to choose from Sesame Street characters previously mentioned, one whom the child would like to be. Again the "why" of the answer was explored.

Procedure

Arlington schools were contacted by telephone and teachers who agreed to have their classes involved in the study distributed a parent letter and permission slip to each student (see letter in Appendix B). The letter to parents explained that the study concerned the long-term effects of Sesame

Street, and that their child would be asked to respond to various questions about the program. Children who returned signed permission slips took part in the study. These children were self-selected in that the teachers first decided whether or not to have their classes involved in the study and parents then decided whether to allow their children to participate.

Ten children were randomly chosen from these Arlington volunteers to act as a pilot group for development of the interview questionnaire. As a result, minor changes in wording were made. For example, the question, "Are there any segments from Sesame Street that you can still remember?," was changed to "Are there any parts from Sesame Street...." The children who participated in the development phase were not included in the study.

Interviewing took place over a six week period during the Fall of 1980. Eight white graduate students of education (seven female, one male) were interviewers. The method of asking questions and probing for answers was standardized by having the interviewers meet after each of their first two interviews to discuss the way in which the children were responding to the questions. As a result, minor changes in wording were made and ways to elicit answers were standardized among the interviewers.

Individual children were interviewed in separate classrooms for approximately 20-25 minutes. The children were told by the interviewer that they were going to be asked many questions about television which would have them "dig deep" into their memories. Sesame Street was not mentioned in the instructions. All interviews were audio-recorded and later transcribed.

Interview Analysis

A random sample of 25 interviews was examined to determine the coding categories for subsequent analysis (see coding categories in Appendix C). This involved first separating the questions into their subparts. For example, Question 16, "Do you remember a character called Roosevelt Franklin? Describe him. What was he like?", was separated into two subparts: "Do you remember a character called Roosevelt Franklin?" and "Describe him. What was he like?". In this fashion, the 23 items on the questionnaire became 60 items on the code sheet.

The second step examined the content of the children's answers to develop general coding categories. The responses on the 25 randomly selected interviews were read carefully, and the different dimensions into which the answers fell were defined. For example, when asked why they enjoyed Sesame Street (Question 4), the children replied that the show was "funny or silly," and/or that they "liked Big Bird and Oscar," and/or that they liked the "one of these things is not like the other" game. These sorts of answers were coded into the following response categories: affective ("It was funny"); characters ("I liked Big Bird"); and segments ("I liked the _____game"). When necessary, "don't know" and "other" dimensions were included in the coding list. A character coding list was also employed in analysis because the children responded with many different names to questions which asked them to recall characters (see Appendix C, p. 9). This method would allow us to examine, for example, how often Cookie Monster was mentioned and in response to which questions.

After coding dimensions had been established through the detailed analysis of 25 randomly chosen interviews, two coders scored all 105 interviews utilizing the code sheets in Appendix C. Inter-rater reliability for coding was computed by the percentage agreement method in which the number of observed agreements is divided by the number of observed agreements plus disagreements. Reliability was assessed at two times -- once on the first ten interviews scored and again on the last ten interviews. Reliability on the first ten averaged 80%, ranging from 77-83%. After discussing disagreements on the initial coding, the coders scored the rest of the data. Reliability on the last ten interviews averaged 91%, ranging from 88-94%.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Sex and age comparisons were performed, but no statistically significant differences for sex or age were found for any interview question. Thus, the results of the group as a whole are presented here. Percentages discussed in this section are based on all subjects from whom usable data were obtained. Data were lost on a few occasions due to either experimenter error (e.g., failing to start the tape recorder) or technical difficulties (e.g., poor quality of the audio tape). Consequently, for any interview question, the sample size may vary from 97 to 105 subjects. The results are presented according to the 16 interview topics defined in the Method section.

Pre-school Viewing Habits

Q 1,2: Did you ever watch TV when you were little -- when you were 3, 4, or 5 years old? What shows did you watch?[1]

> "I used to watch Sesame Street, Electric Company, Misterogers' Neighborhood, and Zoom. That's what I used to watch."[2]

All the fifth and sixth graders reported having watched television in their preschool years. Sesame Street was the first show mentioned by 96% of the group, and it was also the most frequently recalled program (97% of all subjects). Those who did not mention spontaneously Sesame Street among the programs they remembered responded positively when asked if they had viewed the program as preschoolers. So our whole sample had viewed Sesame Street. In addition, 46% mentioned viewing The Electric

[1]Interview questions from Appendix A pertaining to heading category.

[2]Example of typical or interesting interview response.

Company, 41% Misterogers' Neighborhood, 19% cartoons, 10% Zoom, and 18% added a range of "other" programs such as Captain Kangaroo and Villa Allegre:

> "I watched mostly Channel 2 (PBS), Sesame Street, and Electric Company, and some other weird shows that they had. It was sort of like Spanish and stuff."

The program name, Sesame Street, was not mentioned to the children during the pre-interview instructions but it did appear in the parents' letter, so it is possible that the children were biased toward discussing Sesame Street. However, many children mentioned Sesame Street as part of the block of children's programs available on PBS during the early 1970's; The Electric Company and Zoom were first shown in this children's block in Boston in 1971 and 1972, respectively. A surprising result in these viewing data is the low percentage of children who named cartoons.

Recall of Affect and Content

Q 3: What do you remember about Sesame Street? What was the program about? What was it like?

> "They used to have a letter every day. Like they would learn 2 or 3 letters everyday. Like they would start with 'J' or 'K' or something, and they'd name all these words and have these songs about it. And they used to, like, to make it fun, they used to put it with characters like Oscar and stuff. And that'd help you learn easier."

When asked what they "remember about Sesame Street," 70% of the children responded initially with comments about the characters -- "there was Big Bird, Oscar, Count, Grover, and Cookie Monster," and 21% with

comments about the academic aspects -- "It was about how you're supposed to talk and stuff, numbers and what words start with what, things like that."

Many children gave more than one category of response. Characters were involved in 52% of all the answers, and academic elements in 28%. Additional reminiscences in order of frequency of mention included:

Activities (7% of total responses) -- "They had games and songs";

Affective involvement (6%) -- "It was funny";

Segment formats (4%) -- "Sometimes they had little cartoons in it";

Street setting (2%) -- "I remember the place where they live and the store. The store that the old man works in";

Other (1%) -- "They just talked."

Although 27% of the children felt we were repeating ourselves when we asked "what was Sesame Street about, what was it like," 71% of those who responded to the question mentioned the academic quality -- "about learning"; 13% described the street or the characters -- "this street with lots of funny animals on it"; 12% gave affective comments -- "It just gave me a good feeling"; while the remaining 4% gave "other" answers -- "They showed little cartoons."

Q 4: When you were little, did you enjoy watching Sesame Street? Why? Why not?

"Yea. It was wicked funny."

"I enjoyed it. It was something to watch and it wasn't usually boring. And they'd have a lot, instead of focusing on just one thing, they'd have a lot and it would be fun."

Everyone declared that they enjoyed watching Sesame Street. Characters dominated the reasons, appearing in 41% of all the responses -- "I like puppets"; "I liked watching Big Bird." Affective responses were given 37% of the time -- "It made you laugh." Much smaller portions of the total answer pool were accounted for by academic reasons (9%) -- "To learn the alphabet"; specific segment recall (1%) -- "I liked it when the guy used to hold the pies and he went down the stairs"; other responses (7%) -- "There was nothing else on"; and "don't know" (5%) answers.

Q 4: What didn't you like at all about Sesame Street?

> "I don't really know. I don't think I really disliked anything about it."
>
> "When a guy, he always came out and I think he had a beard and he always did funny things and I didn't think they were funny."[1]

When asked what they did not like about Sesame Street, half of the respondents (48%) protested that they liked everything. "Don't know" responses were given by 5%. The remaining 47% of the group mentioned disliking:

Specific segments (29% of all dislike responses) -- "When they have all the animals"; "Like when the kids would run around and make a letter";

Specific characters (27%) -- "The one in the trash can always makes jokes about other people";

Presentation characteristics (22%) -- "When they showed repeats"; "Real pictures, like humans milking cows";

Academic Aspects (10%) -- "Sometimes I didn't like the stuff in between. Like they had stuff like all the numbers and the alphabet and that stuff";

---

[1] We assume that the speaker was referring to the pixillated "George on the Farm" segments.

Affective involvement (7%) -- "Sometimes when you're young you get scared, like when they show snakes";

Other (5%) -- "When they were in that store"; "He [the Count] had cobwebs all over his house."

In summary, the Sesame Street characters monopolized the spontaneous recollections of our fifth and sixth graders. The characters emerged as the most salient elements of the program and were described both positively and negatively. The academic purpose of Sesame Street was also recalled often, although the educational quality was not heavily cited as a basis for enjoying or disliking the show. Further, the children reminisced about individual Sesame Street activities, segments and set characteristics.

All the children reported having enjoyed Sesame Street as preschoolers, with about half being unable or unwilling to remember disliking any part. Most of the unpopular aspects of the program related to specific segments or presentational characteristics. Some of these disliked parts have been validated by CTW researchers with preschoolers. For example, our 10-11 year olds recalled not liking the animal segments and indeed, Lorch and Anderson's (1978) research substantiates the lack of attention of 3-5 year olds to Sesame Street animal scenes. On the other hand, our subjects recalled disliking repetition of segments and we are unaware of any CTW research which supports this feeling with 3-5 year olds.

Motivation for Viewing Sesame Street

Q 5: Did you watch the show because you wanted to learn how to count and know the alphabet? Or did you watch it because it was fun?

> "I watched it cause it was fun and to learn how to count and know the alphabet. That's how I learned the alphabet."

More than half of the children (57%) declared that they watched Sesame Street as preschoolers because it was fun. Another 35% mentioned both the educational and entertainment quality as attractive. Only 5% described their interest as strictly academic and the remaining 3% gave other reasons -- "sometimes I watched because I learned a different language [Armenian] when I'm home."

Frequency of Viewing Sesame Street

Q 6: How often did you used to watch?

> "I think it was on twice a day. And I used to watch it, if I could, once a day."

"Everyday" or "once a day" was the answer given by 89% of the students to describe their Sesame Street viewing habits. The remaining 11% estimated viewing 2-3 times per week.

Self-reported viewing figures are of course suspect; however, the recall data from subsequent questions support the observation that these children are very familiar with the program and probably watched with regularity at some point in their preschool years. In fact, responses to a later interview question (22a) asking when they stopped watching Sesame Street yielded an average termination age of 6.6 years.

Recall of Segments

Q 7: Are there any parts of Sesame Street that you can still remember? Describe them. What do you think they were trying to teach through this/these part(s)?

> "When Bert was trying to go to sleep and Ernie. There was water dripping and they didn't want to go and shut it off. So Bert goes, 'I can't sleep because the water is running.' And so, okay, he [Ernie] goes over and turns on the music and Bert goes, 'I can't go to sleep because the music's on.' So Ernie goes in and turns on the vacuum cleaner and he [Bert] goes 'I can't get to sleep.' So Bert gets up and runs and turns off everything. . . . They were trying to teach us to shut off the water and that after you're done, other people can get to sleep."

Only 8% of the students felt that they could not remember or describe any parts of Sesame Street. The topics mentioned by the remaining students fell into the following categories:

Characters (43% of all parts noted) -- "They used to pick on Oscar";

Specific Segments (35%) -- "They also had some kind of long roller coaster, I think it was. It had like candlepin bowling balls going along. They had that about every show";

Academic (15%) -- "I can remember they showed us numbers and they used to flash a number out";

Setting (5%) -- "I can remember the corner store and there's like a building with a fire escape on the side and there's the front of the house";

Activity (2%) -- "Kids used to play in that little park area."

The intent of this question was to elicit the children's memory of specific Sesame Street segments and indeed segment recall was good, although characters again accounted for the largest portion of the recollections. Segments were not often recalled in great detail but a wide variety of bits were mentioned: the animated typewriter; the baker with pies in hand falling

down the stairs; the monsters sinking in Grover's boat; Grover as waiter; Kermit's interviews; the man who paints numbers on people and objects; Cookie Monster in a "Cry Wolf" story; Cookie Monster eating Ernie's apples; and various arguments between Bert and Ernie. Sesame Street's visit to Hawaii (premiering in 1977-78) was also mentioned in response to this question, indicating again that some of our children had watched the program beyond their fifth year.

Interpretations of the instructional purposes of these segments were relatively straightforward -- "teaching the letters"; "telling how to count"; "subtraction"; "don't lie"; "share your things" -- but the responses about teaching goals definitely reflected an older child's cognitive level and viewpoint. Sometimes, however, even our children were stumped as to defining the educational message of a segment:

> "...like Kermit, outside in the winter. One time, when he got locked out of his house by Grover, he [Kermit] was banging on the window, trying to get back in, because he [Grover] had locked the door on him.... I don't know what it teaches. Probably nothing."

Recall of Characters

Q 9: What characters from Sesame Street do you remember?
Describe _____.
What was he/she like? What was he/she like to other people?

> Big Bird: "He would walk up to everybody and start playing with them. And he tried to help people but he'd always goof it up"; "He was big, not too intelligent, always trying to help somebody."
>
> Bert and Ernie: "Bert had like a cone-shaped head with little bushy hair on the top with floppy arms and Ernie had a round head with bushy hair. They were always arguing or something or Bert was always falling backward because Ernie did something stupid. [They were] friends."
>
> Oscar: "Oscar was grouchy. A huge house it seemed like. He had everything going on inside that [trash can] and he'd sort of like everything the opposite.... If you like cream pie or something, he'd like a mud pie."
>
> Cookie Monster: "When he'd see cookies, like he'd go like bananas and he'd try to get the cookies, as much as he could. He was greedy sometimes and nice sometimes."

Table 1 presents the character recall data in two columns. The left column lists the percentage of respondents who gave a particular character name as their first answer to the question: "What characters from Sesame Street do you remember?" Big Bird was mentioned first by 62% of the children. Bert and Ernie received first accolades from a total of 11% if we add those who named Bert and Ernie individually to those who recalled them as a pair. Eight other muppets and people were each mentioned first by less than 5% of the children: Oscar, Cookie Monster, Snuffle-upagus, Mr. Hooper, Grover, Count, Kermit and Gordon.

Table 1

Recall of Sesame Street Characters

Character Name	Percent of Children Giving Character Name as First Response	Percent of Children Giving Character Name as One of Several Recalled
Big Bird	62%	89%
"Bert and Ernie"	9	56
Ernie	1	11
Bert	1	5
Oscar	5	49
Cookie Monster	4	41
Snuffle-upagus	2	39
Mr. Hooper	3	37
Grover	3	36
Count	2	26
Kermit	2	18
Gordon	1	9
Susan	0	9
Maria	0	8
Bob	0	6
Luis	0	5
David	0	4
Herry Monster	0	3
Roosevelt Franklin	0	1
Herbie	0	1
Mumford	0	1
Kids in General	0	1
Describes Sesame Street character without name	5	31
Anonymous	0	11
Non Sesame Street	0	3

On the average, each child recalled five Sesame Street characters. The right column of Table 1 presents the percentage of children who gave a particular name as one of several characters recollected. Big Bird still tops the list, mentioned by 89% of our group. "Bert and Ernie" as a unit were noted by 56% of the children with another 11% recalling Ernie separately and 5%, Bert separately. The top ten characters remembered were muppets with the exception of Mr. Hooper (#7). The remaining 11 characters listed in Table 1 were noted by less than 10% of the students. Herbie and Mumford the Magician were mentioned in the context of discussing Grover. In total, the children named 13 muppets and 8 human characters.

Many children could not give us names but described characters (31%) with enough detail to indicate that they were indeed specific Sesame Street characters that were remembered -- "there was an old guy who had a store. I forget his name"; "guy in the trash can." The children also described characters that were likely on Sesame Street but did not give enough detail for us to identify a particular person. We classified these responses as "anonymous" characters (11%) -- "I remember one black lady"; "there was a woman who played a guitar." Finally, there were some responses (3%) that were classified as non-Sesame Street, lacking enough description to identify a likely Sesame Street character and/or providing a nonexistent name -- "Mike. He always sang a lot."

When asked to describe the characters, 35% of the total responses concerned characteristic activities -- "he [Count] used to count everything"; "he [Oscar] was messy." Another 33% of the descriptions involved evaluative comments or analyzed the character's personality -- "he [Mr. Hooper] was

nice"; "he was kind of strict, Bert." Physical characteristics comprised 29% of the total responses -- "he [Snuffle-upagus] was big and brown." The remaining 3% of the answers made up an "other" category, often including statements detailing the relationship of the character to another character -- Hooper: "Big Bird used to always call him, Wooper, or something like that."

Q 9 : Do you remember any girl muppets or people? Describe them.

> "Yeah, I remember Maria and Susan and Olivia. Maria had a dark kind of a face and she had black hair and she was very friendly. Susan, she's black, she has, she has, all like a ball of hair curled up. She was friendly too. And Olivia, she had these pigtails like Bo Derek and she was Gordon's sister and she acted good too."

Although Table 1 shows that only 17% of all the characters spontaneously recalled were female (Susan and Maria), probing for specific recall of girl characters yielded a much better showing. Table 2 summarizes the data. A large proportion of the children (84%) remembered something about female characters. Most of the answers (33%) described an identifiable Sesame Street female character without recalling the name -- "I don't know their names. But there was a girl muppet who had like long blonde hair, in pony tails like." Girl muppets were the most difficult to remember, with only 2% of the responses naming Sally or Prairie Dawn. As one boy commented: "They didn't have main girl muppets. They had them from different skits." The children mainly recalled Maria (18% of total responses) and Susan (14%) with Olivia (2%) and Linda (1%) remembered by few.

As with the rest of the characters, the children most often recalled the typical activities of the females (44% of the total responses) -- "Susan always sang songs, as I remember." Secondly, the descriptions focused on

physical characteristics (36%) -- "Olivia always has her hair in corn-rowing." Many fewer evaluative comments (14%) were made about the women -- "Susan was sort of fun." The remaining responses (6%) fell into an "other" category which again included descriptions of character relationships -- "she [Susan] was his [Gordon's] wife."

Q 10: Do you remember a character called Roosevelt Franklin? Describe him. What was he like?

> "Well, his mother taught him how to say the alphabet and the numbers. He had black hair. He was purple, he was a muppet. He was always getting into a little trouble, once in a while."

Only 45% of the children could recall and describe Roosevelt Franklin. Most outlined his characteristic activities (45% of total responses), identifying him typically as a singer (10%), a teacher (14%) and/or as being in a classroom (17%). His physical attributes (26%) were also mentioned. He was recalled usually as a "purple muppet" rather than as being Black. Psychological or evaluative comments comprised 20% of the descriptions of Roosevelt -- "he thought he was cool, like." The remaining 9% of responses comprised an "other" category which often included comments about Roosevelt Franklin's mother -- "his mother kept teaching him to say the alphabet and his numbers." And on occasion, a child would recall being taught something by a Roosevelt Franklin segment: "One day, Roosevelt Franklin had a new friend that came in and he had an eye problem cause he was sitting too close to the TV and he had glasses and that taught me a lesson, so I sat back."

Table 2

Recall of Female and Minority Group Characters

Do you remember:	Category				
	Females	Blacks	Spanish	Indians	Handicapped
Yes [a]	84%	62%	62%	30%	43%
No	16	38	38	70	57
What were their names: [b]					
Can't recall names	33	28	24	51	25
Muppets:					
Sally	1				
Prairie Dawn	1				
Bert	(1) [c]				
Roosevelt Franklin		4			
People:					
Susan	14	15			
Olivia	2	1			
Maria	18	(5)	22	(11)	
Linda	1				12
Buffy				8	
Cody				1	
Gordon		23	(2)		
David		5	(6)		
Luis			16		
Bob			(1)		
Anonymous	24	15	26	22	63
Non Sesame Street	(5)	(4)	(3)	(7)	

(a) Percent of subjects responding
(b) Percent of all subject responses.
(c) Parentheses indicate incorrect responses.

Q 11: Do you remember any black muppets or people?

> "There was Gordon and he had curly hair and was on the show. He acted as the other lady's husband. And they used to always go out together shopping."

The majority of the children (62%) claimed to remember black characters, but only 53% of these responses included names with the descriptions (see Table 2). Gordon was best remembered (23% of total responses) and his wife, Susan (15%), followed behind. In addition, David was mentioned in 5% of the answers, Roosevelt Franklin, 4%, and Olivia, 1%. Maria was incorrectly classified as black 5% of the time. Interestingly, many students described Gordon as having curly hair, which indeed was true of the original Gordon actor, the one whom these children would have seen as preschoolers.

Q 11: Do you remember any Spanish muppets of people?

> "Luis owned a fix-it shop and he was always fixing things and he went around helping people a lot."

Again, 62% of the children said that they recalled Spanish characters, but only 47% of these responses gave descriptions with names and 9% of those were inaccurate, naming David (6%), Gordon (2%) and Bob (1%). Most responses mentioned Maria (22%) and Luis (16%). (See Table 2.)

Q 11: Do you remember any Indian muppets or people?

> "Buffy would come on with this, like a bow. It would be like a bow and she would string it in her teeth. And once they went on a trip, everybody, to her, where she lived."

Only 30% of the children claimed to recall Indian characters (see Table 2). Of those responses mentioning names, 8% described Buffy, 1% recalled her son, Cody, and 11% incorrectly named Maria.

Q 11: Do you remember any handicapped muppets or people?

"Linda. She was deaf. She used sign language."

Almost half of the children (43%) claimed to remember handicapped characters, even though Linda was mentioned by name by only 12% (see Table 2). Linda has appeared on Sesame Street since 1970, but she was not a semi-regular cast member until 1976 when almost all of our children were five years and over. Most of our sample recalled "anonymous" figures (63%) who could have appeared on Sesame Street -- "There was this boy, but he wasn't on it that much. He was in a wheelchair." Occasionally, a response mentioned retarded children on Sesame Street, although the curriculum for the mentally retarded did not appear on the program until our children were 5-8 years of age.

In summary, spontaneous recall of characters was high. Over one-half of the group described Big Bird, Bert, and Ernie; while over one-third remembered Oscar, Cookie Monster, Snuffle-upagus, Mr. Hooper, and Grover. These results are similar to those of Garces and Torrey (1977) and Lorch and Anderson (1978) who tested preschoolers' identification of Sesame Street characters. For both the younger and older children, the muppets were most salient, with Big Bird topping the list, and Mr. Hooper was the best recalled/identified human character. Among the muppets and the human cast, the best remembered characters are the ones that appear most often in the program (i.e., Big Bird and Mr. Hooper). A high correlation seems likely between frequency and duration on screen and the probability of character recall at preschool or preadolescent grade levels.

When specifically asked about minority group characters, over one-third of our respondents could recall, describe, and name the females, blacks, and Spanish people on the show, although Maria's ethnicity was often incorrectly identified. The Indian characters were recalled by few students. In addition, the muppets were not recalled as including any important female or ethnic group characters.

The 9-12 year olds appear to be aware of the existence of the different races and genders on Sesame Street but do not seem predisposed to identify the characters in this way. In most cases, our respondents remembered the characters for what they did -- "fix-it shop owner," and how they did it — "he was smart," rather than for what they looked like. However, we must remind ourselves in interpreting these results that our interviewed sample was all white. It is possible that a minority group sample would be sensitive to a different set of characters and characteristics.

Identification with Characters

Q 12: When you were 4 or 5, did you ever want to be like someone on Sesame Street? Who? Why? If not, of all the characters you've mentioned, which one would you choose to be like? Why?

> "Yes. I used to act like I was Big Bird. I used to stretch up and walk like Big Bird around the house and stuff. He was so nice to people, and he was so tall, and every time they asked him to play he would play with them. And he would do a lot of things with the kids. And he would always come to Mr. Hooper's store and he'd walk behind the counter and he'd get all free sodas and stuff."
>
> "No. I just wanted to be myself and grow up to be a fast runner."

The majority of children (55%) did identify a character that they had wanted to be like. Most preferred Big Bird (27%) -- "because he was kind and generous," or Oscar (11%) -- "because he was so messy." The following characters received votes from less than 10% of the group: Maria (9%); Bert and Ernie, Kermit (7% each); Cookie Monster (5%); Grover (4%); Ernie, Bert, Count, Bob, and Luis (2% each). "Anonymous" characters -- "the woman who sings" accounted for an additional 6% of the responses. The remaining respondents (14%) recalled wanting to be like the kids on Sesame Street -- "because it looked like they had a good time."

Those children (45%) who answered that they had not wanted to be like a Sesame Street character when young were questioned further as to which character they would choose to be like. The majority preferred Ernie (26%) or Big Bird (16%) or Grover (16%). The remaining characters were mentioned by less than 10% of the children: Oscar, Maria, Cookie

Monster (7% each); Bert and Ernie, Bert, Kermit, Snuffle-upagus, Bob, Mr. Hooper, and Susan (3% each).

The children wanted to be like the characters they named mainly because of their characteristic activities (72% of all responses) -- Cookie Monster: "because he liked to eat cookies"; Ernie: "he has a way with words. He says to Bert, 'Now, don't do this' and then he tricks him into it or something like that." Over a third of the explanations (37%) were based on an evaluation of the character's personality or activity: Big Bird: "kind and generous"; Oscar: "because he was funny." Justification of the choices also included liking the character's environment or setting (19%) -- Big Bird: "I like the nest where he lived"; admiring the character's abilities (12%) -- Susan: "I'd like to be a nurse"; and envying the character's physical attributes (8%) -- Maria: "I thought she was pretty." The remaining responses (5%) fell into an "other" category -- Bob. "He was most different. I really couldn't relate to any of the muppets."

In general, the characters which were recalled the best by the children were also mentioned as the ones they most wanted to be like. The two exceptions to this general observation are Mr. Hooper and Snuffle-upagus who were rarely identified as characters to model. Moreover, Maria appeared to be more popular as a character to model than would be predicted from her 8% recall total noted in Table 2. As occurred for previous questions, the children emphasized characteristic activities in their rationale for their choice of character.

Role Playing

Q 13: When you were little, did you ever pretend to be like a character on Sesame Street? Who? Why?

> "Yeh, I used to with my sister. When we were little we used to pretend we were Big Bird and Snuffle and we used to go around the house. And we used to have a toy box. And it was round, so we'd take out all the toys and my sister would sit in it cause she was Big Bird and say that was her nest. And then I'd come in and I'd get stuck in the doorway and then she'd pull me through. And I'd come in and we'd talk and have tea."

About half of our subjects (48%) recalled pretending to be a character on Sesame Street, while the other half (52%) did not recollect such role playing. The children remembered portraying most often Big Bird (22% of all characters mentioned) and Oscar (16%). Bert and Ernie as a pair were mentioned 8% of the time; in addition, individually Bert received 5% and Ernie, 3% of the responses. Other characters noted were Snuffle-upagus (13%); Cookie Monster, Grover (8% each); Kermit, Count (7% each); and "Anonymous" characters (3%). No human characters were mentioned in response to this question.

Again, the greatest proportion of reasons given for having pretended to be a particular character dealt with the muppets' characteristic activities (47%) -- "Grover, 'cause, on every show, he turns into Super Grover. When I was little I used to do that." The children justified their choices also using the following categories of reasons:

Psychological or evaluative comments (24%) -- "Oscar, because in a way he was kind of funny";

Physical characteristics (14%) -- "Me and my little brother acted out Ernie and Bert. I was Bert. He [Bert] was taller than Ernie, and I was taller than him [my brother]";

Character's setting (5%) -- "I used to pretend I was in his nest and visiting";

Character's abilities (5%) -- "Kermit used to teach everybody stuff";

Other (5%) -- "Bert liked birds, and I liked birds too."

In summary, Big Bird and Oscar were the characters that most respondents recalled pretending to be as preschoolers. As answers to previous questions showed, these two muppets were also remembered most often and were noted as the characters the children had most wanted to be like when young. Again, the major reason given for having pretended to be a character was that character's typical activity. Interestingly, the children's responses included mention of every major muppet but no recall of having pretended to be a human Sesame Street character.

Imaginative Play

Q 14: When you were 4 or 5 did you ever play games where you got the idea from Sesame Street? What games did you play? Describe them.

> "Yes, sometimes. A game where three things are the same and one's different and you have to find the different one."

> "Yeah. When I had this game I had an idea about where and how they played it with a ball and they go 'A, B, C, D' and whoever ended up with the ball last would be out."

As with the previous question about role playing, about half (52%) of the children recollected playing games which had their base in the program, although 17% of these positive respondents went on to describe non-Sesame Street activities -- "Sometimes they'd do somersaults and I used to do somersaults even before I watched that show." Most of the children recalled games with academic overtones (30%) -- "There was one

where they had four pictures and one of them didn't belong in there. You had to find out which one didn't belong in there." Also commercial games were mentioned often (25%) -- "I had a Sesame Street game and I used to have lots of Sesame Street records." Some children described imitating characters (8%) -- "I used to pretend I was in a trash can like Oscar. . . . We have this chair and I would hide behind it and pretend to come out, and I would act like the Cookie Monster and have a deep voice." Other children (7%) remembered participating while viewing the program -- "I remember doing exercises. They'd be doing jumping jacks and I'd do them too." The remaining subjects (13%) recalled game activities that did not fit well into the above categories -- "Well, sort of, 'cause we used to get the magazine. We'd play games out of that. That was like on TV"; "You have a character. You'd use characters for the game and like you'd make like a game, like you'd go each space and stuff, and you'd have a character and something."

Recall of the Street and Set

Q. 14a: What do you remember about the street on Sesame Street? What was on the street? Anything else?

> "It was like an apartment house and a little crosswalk and then there was a whole other side and between those two was a lot with stores where all the people on Sesame Street keep their stuff. They play basketball there and they have a tire swing. On the other side was a curb with a little park. There was a train station and the train was, I mean, the bus would stop and pick up Ernie and Bert or somebody."

> "It had a store, a drugstore, a handyman shop, an apartment building, and a big courtyard. And Big Bird lived in a big wooden place and it had a sign that said Sesame Street on it."

Although the children only mentioned street elements in 2% of their spontaneous responses when asked what they remember about the program Sesame Street (see p. 12), in response to more specific questioning they recollected many details of the street scene. Most of the responses (37%) described the living and working places on the street -- "Mr. Hooper's store, Oscar the Grouch can. . . . There was a little opening to go through to get to Big Bird's nest." Street objects were mentioned in 29% of the answers -- ". . . a lightpole and the swing and the newspaper stand." Another 21% of the total responses concerned the play areas on the street -- "there was a play area, with tire swings that the kids played at." The remaining responses were categorized as "other" (13%) -- "It was always so clean"; "It was sort of like a dead-end"; "a guy with fruits and stuff"; "and then the street just went up."

Reality of the Street and People

Q 14b: When you were little, did you think it could be a real street in a city? Why?

> "No. It was always clean and everybody was playing in the street and all. If everybody was playing in the street, they'd probably get run over! And here the kids never got run over!
>
> "Yes. Cause it just looked like everybody was so real and everything when I was small. And like all the people and their neighbors and everything. It just seemed like a place I would like to go to and I think it would be a real place that I could go to."

One subject answered this question as if it asked whether or not the street actually existed -- "No. Because I knew it was just a show." Most children tried to estimate their impression of the realistic quality of the street, how representative it was of an actual city street. The majority (75%) of the respondents felt that the street seemed real; 17% said no; and 7% gave yes/no answers -- "There was a lot of people going around, but there was no cars going through the streets." (See Table 3.) In justifying their answers almost everyone commented on the setting (71% of the reasons) -- "Yes. It went on a place where houses were so real"; "It looked real because they had a store and different other stores"; "No. A real street wouldn't have Big Bird's nest." Another 21% of the reasons concerned the street characters -- "No. It just didn't look real with a monster popping out of a trash can"; "Yeah. 'Cause it had people." The remaining 8% of the responses discussed the activities of the street as indicating its realness -- "it was kind of fake because it seemed like no, the only cars you ever saw on it were taxis"; "Yeah, people were always walking in and out."

Q 15: When you were 4 or 5, did you think that the people -- Mr. Hooper, Susan, Bob -- were true to life? Why/Why not?

> "Yes. I didn't know any better and I thought TV was always real."
>
> "Yup. Because they act like it. They were so friendly to everybody and Mr. Hooper was so nice to everybody and was sort of grumpy in the store. And Bob was real nice, and he acted like he wasn't a puppet, so I knew. I started putting the pieces together and like when I went to the store I'd sort of compare them to other people and they were just the same."

Most of the children (78%) agreed that the people were "true to life," 9% disagreed, and 13% gave qualified yes/no answers (see Table 3). Most of the reasons pointed out the reality (or unreality) of the characters' activities (54%) -- "in Mr. Hooper's store, there was people going in there"; "because they taught the kids"; "because they acted like everyday people." Physical characteristics accounted for another 42% of the response justifications -- "No, because they looked different"; "Yes, because they were just like any other people. They dressed the same. They talked the same." The remaining 4% of the responses concerned a more psychological evaluation of the characters -- "some people were like them. . . the personality."

Q 16: On the whole, when you were little, did you think that life on Sesame Street was real? Why or Why not?

> "Yeah, I guess I did, because like I probably thought that some of it was fake and some of it was real, because sometimes you could see the strings. Sometimes I used to think it was just the background, but then my sisters used to tell me that it wasn't."

Only half (48%) of the group felt they could give an unequivocal yes answer to this question, 25% responded no, and 27% gave a qualified yes/no response (see Table 3). Most based their answers on an understanding of the characters' reality (55%) -- "because there were real people and fake people, the puppets"; "Kermit, he's a frog and he talks, frogs don't talk." The setting was important to 21% of the justifications -- "It seemed so real because there was a store and there was like a little park and everything." The activities of the characters were mentioned in 16% of the responses -- "In a way. . . just the people, the way of life, the way they

went to the store, went to work." The remaining 8% of the responses concerned a psychological evaluation -- "A little bit. . . they had problems, too."

In summary, the last three questions consider the child's sense of realness of the street scene, the people, and life on the street. Table 3 summarizes all the data. A majority of the students felt that the street could be a real street and that the people were true to life. While discussing the street, most referred to elements in the setting, and while evaluating the people, most referred to their activities or physical characteristics. When asked to consider the reality of life on Sesame Street, only 48% of the children were positive about the realistic presentation of life. Those who doubted the reality typically mentioned the fact that the muppets are not live people, although some children qualified this statement by explaining that the muppets had human characteristics.

Obviously, reality/fantasy is a difficult quality to assess simply because of the many levels on which one can define realness. Some children interpreted the questions to mean actual existence of the street or living quality of a character:

> "Well, you couldn't actually go to Sesame Street";
>
> ". . . they had real skin and flesh and if they got cut, once the store man did when he was trying to cut a piece of bread, he was bleeding, so they have to be real."

Other respondents evaluated the representativeness of the scene and characters:

TABLE 3

Sense of Realness of the Street, the People, and Life on the Street

Response	Street	People	Life
Yes	76%	78%	48%
No	17	9	25
Yes/No	7	13	27
Category of Justification			
Setting	71%		21%
Characters	21		55
Activities	8	54%	16
Physical Characteristics		42	
Psychological Evaluation		4	8

> "Yes, 'cause it was realistic. It had the curbstone and the apartments looked like Boston";
>
> "Mr. Hooper seemed like a real store owner. I mean, he had a store and all";
>
> "Yeah, because there were stores. . . and it was in a circle, the street that we lived on was a circle, like a semi-circle. It was just like a street you'd see, but it didn't have any cars. It seemed kind of like a fantasy. If you'd seen one or two cars coming by, it wouldn't have seemed that much like a fantasy."

Many tried to establish the difference between the reality of people versus puppets or live action scenes versus cartoons:

> "Well, I knew that Oscar and Big Bird were puppets and there was really people inside them, but they acted like a real grouch, like some people."

Some students even tried to distinguish between "true to life" and the fact that Sesame Street was a television program:

> "Well, they were really true to life, but you wouldn't meet them in any grocery store. You might meet them in Hollywood though";
>
> "No, [it wasn't real] 'cause I knew it was just a television program."

For these questions concerning the realness of the program, again we encounter the problem of 10 and 11 year olds trying to reconstruct the experiences of their preschool years. In most cases, the responses we received were not really comments on memories but thoughts of a ten year old -- "Well, I haven't really thought about it, but I guess it could be a real street," and preadolescent visions of what a preschooler should think -- "They're really just playing parts, but when I was young I probably didn't know any better." Many respondents spoke of the reality of the street with a cognitive sophistication that is inconceivable in a preschooler (Quarfoth, 1979) -- "Well, the puppets aren't alive, but Bob and Maria are alive, so some of it's real."

The most that we probably should conclude from these results is that the children both as preschoolers and preadolescents found Sesame Street to be acceptably realistic in its depiction so that they would watch it, imitate it, learn from it, and be influenced by it in their everyday play and school life. We have learned already from previous questions that the fact that the puppets were not alive or not real did not prevent the children from wanting to be like them or from pretending to be muppets in their preschool play.

Prosocial and Academic Value

Q. 17: Did the show teach you anything about people and how to treat people? About how to treat friends and people in your family? What?

> "Yes. They taught you a lot of manners and I'm pretty sure I remember one lesson that told me about being nice to your elders. And in a lot of instances they showed us that, like Ernie and Bert, they showed us they were nice to each other and they helped each other when people were in trouble. Everybody was nice to each other and if somebody like got in a fight or something they'd always make up and it always turned out so nice and everything. So I thought that that's how you should really act and everything would turn out pretty good. It does."

A large group of children (88%) believed that Sesame Street taught them something about how to treat people. About half of the responses were specifically behavioral (47%) -- "not to hit"; "to share"; "not to shout"; while the other half were generally affective (47%) -- "be nice"; "be nice"; "be nice"; "be friendly." The remaining 6% of the responses formed a miscellaneous "other" category, often not traceable to Sesame Street -- "when your older sister's got homework, don't scribble all over it and don't mouth back to your parents."

Only a few children remembered specific segments -- "two kids would be painting and they would teach you cooperation, and like one would help out with the smock, and then the other would help out with smock, and then they would start to paint." Even fewer children recalled anything related to racial differences; one of the few said:

> "One muppet called another muppet a name, but someone broke it up and said don't criticize your friends. And the kid goes 'what's criticize?' And the guy say it's when you call your friend a name, just because they're different from you. Like don't make fun of them just because they're different from you or they're another color."

Q. 21: Think back to when you were in kindergarten or first grade. Do you think Sesame Street helped prepare you for school in any way? How?

> "Yeah. Like when I was watching it, my parents usually had a pencil and paper there so I could copy down the numbers, how they looked like and the letters, so when I went to school I would know how to write the numbers and how to say them."

A large percentage (85%) of the group felt that Sesame Street helped prepare them for school either by teaching them the alphabet (44% of topics mentioned) or numbers (45%):

> "Yeah, because it taught you the alphabet and you need to, you learn that in kindergarten. So if you know the alphabet, then you're ahead one step."

> "It helped me to count and that's all. It showed me the numbers and how to write them and how to say them."

Other topics mentioned were spelling (8%), prosocial behavior (2 subjects), Spanish (1 subject), and addition (1 subject).

Pacing of Segments

Q. 18 a,b: When you used to watch the show did you ever find that some parts of Sesame Street were too fast to keep up with? What parts were those? Did you ever find that some parts were too slow to follow, that you got bored? Describe these parts.

> "Yeah. When they were counting everything, sometimes they'd go sort of fast and I couldn't catch along."
>
> "Them animal things, that was so boring. They put on an animal and then they talk about it for a year and it'd get boring."

The children were evenly split on whether they thought some segments were too fast (52%) or not (48%). Of the half that felt the pace was fast, most (53%) mentioned a specific skill -- "Yeah, when they used to count in Spanish"; "Yeah, when they counted. . . 1, 2, 3, 4." The remaining responses (47%) mentioned specific segments:

> "Yes. Well, there was this thing or like a movie and they do the numbers -- 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10 -- and they pick a number out and they show you a little picture. I feel sorry for this little guy because this baker, he's holding a pie and keeps falling down the stairs. And I started crying because the guy kept falling down the stairs. I didn't know what was happening."

Almost all of those children who felt that part of the show was too fast referred to counting and number segments.

More children (61%) felt that parts of Sesame Street were too slow as opposed to too fast and there was much more variety in their choice of segments which were slow. Some children (30%) mentioned a particular skill area -- "when the people were counting, they counted it a bit slow."

Others (32%) recalled specific segments -- "When they showed the guy drawing letters in the sky that got real boring 'cause all you saw was some guy drawing letters in the sky." General format considerations were also often mentioned (38%):

> ". . . people come up and they sit on some place in the city, like on a crate or a box and they sing a song, you know. I wasn't too big on that, it was boring, kind of";
>
> "Yes, like some of the cartoons":
>
> "I got bored when they repeated things";
>
> "Only when they used to speak Spanish";
>
> "the part where they show all the animals. It goes so slow."

Parental Involvement in Sesame Street Experience

Q. 19a: Do you remember your parents telling you anything about Sesame Street? Did they encourage you to watch? What did they say?

> "How I should watch it and I might learn something. It's a better show to watch than I would regularly like to watch, like I might learn something and it might be good for me."

Over half of the students (56%) recollected that their parents encouraged them to watch Sesame Street -- "My mother, all the time she'd say 'Sesame Street is on, go watch it.'"

Viewing and Discussion with Others

Q. 19b: Did your parents or anyone else used to watch Sesame Street with you?

> "I know my brother did, my next oldest brother. Now I have a little niece that always watches it too, and I watch it with her. My brother used to stay with me and watch it. My parents, they'd stay there and watch it with me and if I wouldn't understand something I'd ask them, and they'd tell me what it was and then I'd understand a little better about Sesame Street.

Although 8% of the children said that they viewed the program alone as preschoolers, the remaining students mentioned a wide variety of co-viewers:

Mother	38%	Grandparents	4%
Siblings	36%	Friends	4%
Parents	7%	Cousins	2%
Father	6%	Other	3%

Q. 23a-d: Do you have younger brothers or sisters? Do they ever watch Sesame Street? Do you ever watch with them? Do you ever talk to them about the show? What do you talk about?

> "I have a younger brother and he's about three and he watches it all the time."

> ". . . he was laughing like a loon at some parts and then you know he was really bored with other parts, and I told him that, in those in-between parts to really pay attention, cause they're probably the one's that teach you the most."

A large proportion (76%) of our group has younger siblings and 90% of these watch Sesame Street. While 92% of the respondents with sibling viewers said they coview, only 72% claimed that they ever discuss the program with the younger children. Thus, 45% of our sample coview and discuss Sesame Street with their sibling viewers. This group said they:

Discussed characters (35%) -- "Like he goes, 'Is Snuffle really real?' and I'll say 'It's just a muppet or somebody'";

Encouraged learning (27%) -- "Like I tell her, look at that, that was so funny, what happened? And have her tell me what happened";

Explained or taught (18%) -- "Like they're teaching you the alphabet and counting. I'd try to help him to write them as they were saying them";

Talked about general or miscellaneous aspects (20%) -- "Like she asks me how long it will be on and stuff"; "Just things that they see on the show."

Comparison of Sesame Street with Other Children's Programs

Q. 20a: When you were 4 or 5 years old, how did you compare Sesame Street to other programs that you used to watch? Did you think that there was a difference between Sesame Street and cartoons? What was this difference?

> "Yeah. Cartoons were unreal and anything could happen to them. They could fall in a pit and come out regular. They could fall, they could do anything, but Sesame Street was more real."

Only 11% of the children said there were no differences between Sesame Street and cartoons. Those who did compare gave answers falling into the following categories:

Realism (36% of all comments) -- "Well, in cartoons they run through walls and they fall off cliffs. This [Sesame Street] was sort of true to life";

Academic (19%) -- "The cartoons, they were funny and stuff, but they really didn't teach you anything";

Characters (11%) -- "Yeah. On Sesame Street there was real puppets and cartoons, it was drawn. And on Sesame Street there was real people and on cartoons, there wasn't";

Quality (7%) -- "Yeah. I thought Sesame Street was a little better, and it was longer too. Sometimes I didn't understand the cartoons, but I always liked watching Sesame Street";

Activities (6%) -- "On the cartoons they were making everybody get hurt and everything, and you don't see that on Sesame Street";

Set (4%) -- "Cartoons don't have a cartoon background. It looks like it's crayoned in or something";

Other (6%) -- "There was quite a big difference between other cartoon shows, because in some parts it [Sesame Street] is real photography, and other parts it's clay animation, and other parts it's comic animation. It's like assorted."

Q. 20b: Did you think that there was a difference between Sesame Street and Misterogers'? What was the difference?

> "Quite a big difference, because for one, first of all, Misterogers' took us, you know to this place called the land of make believe, you know. And it too wasn't any comic or anything like that, it was just the same thing, and what he did was he took all the people from the normal place and just gave them imaginary names, and put them into there."

Again 12% of the group felt there were no differences between these two programs. Those who disagreed suggested differences fitting into the following categories:

Characters (24%) -- "Misterogers' is just one person talking and Sesame Street is like cartoons, muppets talking, and real people";

Activities (20%) -- "He [Misterogers'] had an imaginary land, and he had a little trolley and he'd press buttons, and it would take him into make-believe land with his puppets";

Set (13%) -- "Yes, because they're [Sesame Street] always outside and never inside. Misterogers' was inside";

Quality (12%) -- "I liked Sesame Street better than Misterogers' because Misterogers' was sort of in a serious way and Sesame Street was in a fun way";

Academic (8%) -- Misterogers' didn't really teach you how to count or anything";

Realism (6%) -- "Misterogers' had things that were at least a little closer to real life";

Other (5%) -- "Sesame Street had little cartoons in the middle and Misterogers' just didn't have that. They just had real scenes."

Q. 20b: Did you think that there was a difference between Sesame Street and Captain Kangaroo? What was the difference?

> "Yeah, because Captain Kangaroo was all cartoons and he used to have different people. And the muppets he used were different from the ones they used on Sesame Street because on Sesame Street they would work them by things hanging. On Captain Kangaroo they'd have people, like they used to always have the characters behind a table or something and every time the puppet moves you could sometimes see the person's shirt going up with the puppet."

Over one quarter of our group (27%) felt that there was no difference between these two programs. The rest of the children noted differences falling into the following categories:

Characters (33%) -- "Captain Kangaroo was like a story about how he lived";

Activities (15%) -- "Yeah. He'll read stories once in awhile";

Quality (6%) -- "I got bored sometimes watching Captain Kangaroo";

Academic (5%) -- "They don't teach the alphabet, numbers, and stuff";

Realism (4%) -- "Like Sesame Street, real people would talk and stuff like that";

Set (4%) -- "Sesame Street seemed out in the open in a real street and Captain Kangaroo seemed like in the background";

Other (6%) -- "He'd always have these chickens and things like gerbils."

Table 4 summarizes the three comparisons and the distribution of the categories of differences mentioned by the subjects. The cartoons and Misterogers' were perceived as being more different from Sesame Street than

Captain Kangaroo, but the comparison with the Captain may have suffered because it was the third in a row of similar questions posed. Our students remarked that both Misterogers' and Captain Kangaroo were different from Sesame Street mainly because of the characters (24%, 33%; respectively) and their activities (20%; 15%). Neither realism nor academic aspects were seen as very differentiating criteria between Sesame Street and Misterogers' (6%, 8%; respectively) or Captain Kangaroo (4%; 5%). In contrast, realism and academic goals were the main distinguishing factors mentioned between Sesame Street and cartoons (36%; 19%; respectively).

Current Opinion of Sesame Street

Q. 22 a-c: How old were you stopped watching Sesame Street? Or do you still watch it? Did you ever watch it again? What did you think about when you saw it at this later time? Do you like it as much?

> "In first grade I still watched Misterogers' and Electric Company, but I didn't watch Sesame Street too much in first grade";
>
> "Now I think it's a good show for smaller kids, because now it teaches you, even it's getting further advanced. It's teaching you some newer characters now."

Our group said they stopped watching Sesame Street at an average age of 6.6 years; 76% of the students estimated first and second grades. Almost all of the kids (91%) admitted to having viewed Sesame Street since then -- "I was home last Tuesday, sick. I watched then." Some children felt that Sesame Street was the same as ever (6%), while others noted its changes (13%) -- "It's different. Like it has a lot of new muppets and a lot of new people." Many students thought that the program was still enjoyable (22%) -- "'cause it tells you things you never heard before";

Table 4

Sesame Street Compared With

Other Children's Programs

Category of Difference	Between *Sesame Street* and Cartoons	Misterogers'	Captain Kangaroo
No Difference	11%	12%	27%
Academic	19	8	5
Activities	6	20	15
Characters	11	24	33
Quality	7	12	6
Realism	36	6	4
Set	4	13	4
Other	6	5	6

whereas others complained that they know everything that the program teaches (13%) -- "I really didn't like it as much because it's telling you things you already know." A portion of the responses identified the program as one for little kids (18%) -- "I think it's kids stuff now." Others gave more affective answers (16%) -- "It's still funny"; "I know what's going to happen, so it's sort of boring." The remaining responses made up an "other" category (12%) -- "Well, I thought it was good that I watched it when I was little."

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The four caveats presented in the introduction definitely apply to our retrospective data: (1) clearly, our 9-12 year olds reconstructed their memories from verbal and visual images employing their higher-order cognitive abilities; (2) there was evidence that the students had viewed the program in recent times as well as during their preschool years, especially those who had younger siblings at home; (3) their memories sometimes had the flavor of family folklore and (4) their desire to please the interviewer perhaps produced responses favorable to Sesame Street. In spite of these limitations, we believe that several recommendations emerge from our preadolescents' long-lasting impressions of the program.

Our results should encourage Sesame Street programmers to continue most of what they were doing in the seasons of 1971-76. For example, our sample was aware of the different races and genders of characters on the program but recalled the characters more for what they did than for what they looked like. Differences in race and sex are treated straightforwardly on Sesame Street and it is clear that our students do not remember race and sex as issues for conflict but simply as characteristic of the members of a shared community. Moreover, program segments which presented content slightly difficult for the preschooler, or posed moral/social dilemmas, or employed two levels of humor were reorganized, interpreted anew, and enjoyed again by the more advanced preadolescent who recalled them seven years later. Through memories, Sesame Street has reverberating effects on viewers as they grow older.

Not only is Sesame Street affecting preadolescents through memories, but a substantial portion of our group still views the program on occasion,

usually with a sibling at home. This finding suggests two recommendations. First, as controllers of the channel tuner, the older sibling needs to be wooed to join the preschoolers in their viewing, just as the preschooler's mother was in the early seasons of Sesame Street. Segments of interest to older children could be presented early in the program to encourage their allegiance. For example, existing pre-science segments or Kermit's fairy tale interviews seem likely candidates, but specific segments could be selected easily through appeal research with the older age group.

Our second suggestion concerns the older sibling as coviewer and teacher. Three-quarters of our respondents who viewed with their younger siblings also claimed to have discussed the program with them. Sesame Street could develop segment formats that would investigate interaction between coviewers or sibling pairs to take advantage of the fact that a young teacher, or at least a sympathetic bystander, is available to many preschool viewers.

Finally, we were impressed by the 85% of our sample who recalled that Sesame Street had taught them some new ways in which to treat other people. "Cooperation" was a key word in many recollections, just as it appeared as a vocabulary word within early Sesame Street segments. It is our feeling that the long lasting as well as the short term effects of Sesame Street's social curriculum would improve if more effort were given to labeling explicitly and simply social behaviors and interactions. Program segments in this curriculum area are sometimes difficult to interpret and explicitly stating the case through a word label need not detract from the entertainment quality of a piece. Indeed, the verbal labeling of "cooperation" seems to have added to the appeal and memorability of these segments. An explicit label may provide a good tag word for memory storage of segment content.

In a comparable manner, our preadolescents were well aware that Sesame Street had helped prepare them for the early grades of school, although they reported that this preparation focussed on the learning of numbers and letters. Their clear realization and acceptance of the goal of school preparation should encourage producers to extend the forms of school preparation that are presented. Indeed, the new curriculum areas introduced in September, 1981 for Sesame Street's 13th season, under the heading of The School, are very consistent with our findings. Not only can preschoolers be alerted to the routines that they will encounter in the school, and to what teachers and peers expect of them and what they can expect from teachers and peers; the producers can attempt the more ambitious goal of identifying school as a place where new knowledge is acquired, new skills and discoveries can be realized.

Our results on "pretend play" also have useful implications for programming. Some critics of Sesame Street have speculated that the pace of the program would not encourage imaginative play and might even discourage it. This is not what our preadolescents report. One-half report specific recollections of how they incorporated Sesame Street characters and activities into their imaginative play, during and after their viewing. Any formats that provide additional encouragement to build imaginatively on what they have seen will serve our preschool audience well.

In conclusion, we believe that Sesame Street holds a special place in our 9-12 year olds' recollections of their childhood. Watching children spontaneously imitate their favorite characters, or walk down the street recalling the location of its stores and buildings, or reminisce about a growing situation that was aided by the program's prosocial messages convinced us that years later, children do remember Sesame Street as having had an influence on their young lives.

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APPENDIX A

INTERVIEW QUESTIONNAIRE

I'M GOING TO ASK YOU A FEW QUESTIONS ABOUT TELEVISION

(Warm-up) Do you ever watch television? What programs do you like to watch?

1) Did you ever watch television when you were little -- when you were 3, 4, or 5 years old? (Pre-school viewing habits)

2) What shows did you watch? IF DOES NOT MENTION SS, ASK: Did you ever watch SS? (Pre-school viewing habits)

3) What do you remember about SS?
What was the program about? like? (recall of affect and content)

4) When you were little, did you enjoy watching SS? Why or why not?
What didn't you like at all about SS? (recall of affect and content)

5) Did you watch the show because you wanted to learn to count and say the alphabet or did you watch it because it was fun? (motivation for viewing)

6) How often did you used to watch? (frequency of viewing)

7) Are there any parts of SS that you can still remember? Describe them.
What do you think they were trying to teach through this part/these parts? (specific recall of segment)

8) What characters from SS do you remember?

FOR EACH CHARACTER ASK: Describe _____?
What was he/she like?
What was he/she like to other people? (specific recall of characters)

9) Do you remember any (other) girl muppets or people? Who? Describe her/them. (recall of female characters)

10) Do you remember a character called Roosevelt Franklin? Describe him.
What was he like? (recall of Black character)

11) Do you remember any black muppets or people on SS? Any Spanish muppets or people?
Any Indian muppets or people?
Any handicapped muppets or people? Do you know what a handicapped person is? Describe. (recall of minority group characters)

12) When you were 4 or 5 did you ever want to be like someone on SS? IF YES, Why? IF NO, Of all the characters you mentioned, which one would you choose to be like? Why? (identification with character and role modeling).

13) When you were little, did you ever pretend to be like a character on SS? Who and why? (role playing and imaginative play)

14) When you were 4 or 5 did you ever play games where you got the idea from SS? Describe them. What games did you play? (imaginative play)

14a) What do you remember about the street on SS? PROBE: What was on the street? Anything else? (general recall of street and set)

14b) When you were little, did you think it could be a real street in a city? Why? (sense of realness of the street)

15) When you were 4 or 5, did you think that the people -- Mr. Hooper, Susan, Bob -- were true to life? Why or why not? (sense of realness of the people)

16) On the whole, when you were little, did you think that life on SS was real? Why or why not? (overall sense of realness)

17) Did the show teach you anything about people and how to treat people? About how to treat friends and people in your family? What? (prosocial value of Sesame Street)

18a) When you used to watch the show did you ever find that some parts of SS were too fast to keep up with? What parts were those? (pacing)

18b) Did you ever find that some parts were too slow to follow, that you got bored? Describe these parts. (pacing)

19a) Do you remember your parents telling you anything about SS? Did they encourage you to watch? What did they say? (parental encouragement)

19b) Did your parents or anyone else used to watch SS with you? (viewing and discussion of SS with others, as a preschooler)

20a) When you were 4 or 5 years old, how did you compare SS to other programs that you used to watch? (e.g., cartoons, Mr. Rogers, Captain Kangaroo).

20b) Did you think that there was a difference between SS and cartoons? SS and Mr. Rogers? SS and Captain Kangaroo? What was this difference? (comparison of SS with other children's shows)

21) Think back to when you were in kindergarten or first grade. Do you think SS helped prepare you for school in any way? How? (academic value of SS)

22a) How old were you when you stopped watching SS? Or do you still watch SS?

22b) Did you ever watch it again? (continuity of viewing SS)

22c) What did you think about it when you saw it at this later time? Do you like it as much? (current opinion of SS)

23a) Do you have younger brothers or sisters?

23b) Do they ever watch SS?

23c) Do you ever watch with them?

23d) Do you ever talk to them about the show? What do you talk about? (viewing and discussion of SS with others, as an older child)

HARVARD UNIVERSITY

GRADUATE SCHOOL OF EDUCATION

Roy E. Larsen Hall, Appian Way
Cambridge, Massachusetts 02138

Dear Parents:

The Center for Research in Children's Television of the Harvard Graduate School of Education, along with the Children's Television Workshop, is conducting a study on the long-term effects of Sesame Street. We would like to ask your child to participate, during school hours, in an individual, 25 minute interview with myself or my assistant, Yolanda Mancilla. He or she will be asked to respond to 20 questions about Sesame Street: what they remember about characters like Ernie and Big Bird, about the animated segments that teach letters and numbers, about what made them laugh or think about new things, and about how they feel the program may have helped them, both socially and academically, upon entering school.

We would like to assure you that all names will be kept confidential, and that your child will be free to withdraw from the interview at any time. This study will be used as a pilot for a nationwide study to be conducted by the Children's Television Workshop in 1981.

If you agree to allow your child to be interviewed, please sign the enclosed consent form and return it to the school. If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to call us at (617) 495-3541.

Cordially,

Janine Bempechat

Janine Bempechat, M.Ed.
Project Director

HARVARD UNIVERSITY

GRADUATE SCHOOL OF EDUCATION

LABORATORY OF HUMAN DEVELOPMENT

ROY E. LARSEN HALL, APPIAN WAY
CAMBRIDGE, MASSACHUSETTS 02138

I have discussed with my child, _____,
the possibility of his or her being interviewed for the Sesasme Street study, and give my consent to his or her participation. Both I and my child understand that all names will be kept confidential and that he or she is free to withdraw from the interview at any time.

_____

Parent's signature

APPENDIX C

S.S. RETROSPECTIVE - CODE SHEET

Number of Interview Questions from Appendix A

1. DID YOU EVER WATCH TV WHEN LITTLE? 1

100 Yes
101 No

2. WHAT DID YOU WATCH? 2

200 SS
201 TEC
202 Zoom
203 Mr. R
204 Captain K.
205 Cartoons
206 Other

3. WHAT DO YOU REMEMBER ABOUT SS? 3

300 Characters (comment names)
301 Academic ("it was about numbers")
302 Setting (comment on the street, stores)
303 Format (comment on types of segments)
304 Activities ("they had games, songs")
305 Affect ("it was funny")
306 Don't know/can't remember
307 Other

4. WHAT WAS SS LIKE, ABOUT? 3

400 Academic -"about learning"
401 Affective -"it was fun to watch"
402 Descriptive - about street, characters
403 Can't remember
404 Not distinguished from Question 3
405 Other

5. WHEN LITTLE, DID YOU ENJOY SS? Why?/Why not? 4

500 Yes
501 No

6. WHY? 4

600 Affective -"funny, like it"
601 Characters
602 Segment - comment on specific scene
603 Academic -"'cause you learned"
604 Don't know
605 Other

7. WHAT DIDN'T YOU LIKE AT ALL ABOUT SS? 4

700 Affective
701 Characters - comment names
702 Segment - refer to specific segment
703 Academic - refer to skills
704 Presentation - boring, repetitious
705 Don't know
706 Didn't specify
707 Other
708 Liked everything/nothing

8. DID YOU WATCH BECAUSE COUNT, ALPHABET OR FUN? 5

800 Academic
801 Fun
802 Both
803 Other

9. HOW OFTEN WATCHED? 6

900 Everyday/once a day
901 2-3 times/week

10. ANY PARTS CAN STILL REMEMBER? 7

1000 Yes
1001 No

11. DESCRIBE THESE PARTS 7

1100 Segments - "the animal parts"
1101 Characters - comment names
1102 Setting - "there were people on the stairs"
1103 Activities - "they would sing"
1104 Academic - "they used to teach letters"

12. WHAT CHARACTERS DO YOU REMEMBER? 8

1200 →1228 (see master list on p. 9)

13. DESCRIBE THEM 8

1300 Physical - "tall, yellow"
1301 Psychological - "cute, weird"
1302 Characteristic activities - "always counting," " eating cookies"
1303 Other

14. DO YOU REMEMBER ANY GIRL MUPPETS OR PEOPLE? 9

1400 → 1428 (see p. 9)

15. DESCRIBE 9

1500 Physical - "yellow braids"
1501 Psychological - "nice, happy"
1502 Characteristic activities - "always teaching"
1503 Other

16. DO YOU REMEMBER ROOSEVELT FRANKLIN? 10

1600 Yes
1601 No

17. DESCRIBE HIM 10

1700 Physical - "striped shirt, a muppet"
1701 Psychological - "cool, smart"
1702 Classroom - "he was in a classroom"
1703 Singing -
1704 Teacher - "RF was a teacher"
1705 Reference to mother
1706 Can't describe
1707 Other

18. DO YOU REMEMBER ANY BLACK MUPPETS OR PEOPLE? 11

1800 Yes
1801 No

19. WHO? 11

1900 → 1928 (see p. 9)

20. DO YOU REMEMBER ANY SPANISH MUPPETS OR PEOPLE? 11

2000 Yes
2001 No

21. WHO? 11

2100 → 2128 (see p. 9)

22. DO YOU REMEMBER ANY INDIAN MUPPETS OR PEOPLE? 11

2200 Yes
2201 No

23. WHO? 11

2300 → 2328 (see p. 9)

24. DO YOU REMEMBER ANY HANDICAPPED MUPPETS OR PEOPLE? 11

2400 Yes
2401 No

25. WHO? 11

2500 → 2528 (see p. 9)

26. DID YOU EVER WANT TO BE LIKE SOMEONE ON SS? 12

2600 Yes
2601 No

27. WHO? 12

2700 → 2728 (see p. 9)

28. WHY? 12

2800 Physical - "wanted to be tall"
2801 Psychological - "wanted to be smart"
2802 Characteristic activities - "so I could eat cookies"
2803 Setting - "so I could live in a nest"
2804 Abilities - "I wanted to fix things"
2805 Don't know
2806 Other

29. DID YOU EVER PRETEND TO BE LIKE SOMEONE ON SS? 13

2900 Yes
2901 No

30. WHO? 13

3000 → 3028 (see p.9)

31. WHY? 13

3100 Physical - "made a trunk like Snuffleopagous"
3101 Psychological - "laughed like Ernie"
3102 Characteristic activities - "counted everything"
3103 Setting - "the trash can"
3104 Abilities
3105 Don't know
3106 Other

32. DID YOU EVER PLAY GAMES WHERE YOU GOT THE IDEA FROM SS? 14

3200 Yes
3201 No

33. DESCRIBE THEM 14

3300 Commercial game - refer to SS games, toys
3301 Academic-Same/different
3302 Role playing -
3303 Participation while viewing
3304 Forget
3305 Non-SS activities - "hide and seek; hopscotch"
3306 Other

34. WHAT DO YOU REMEMBER ABOUT THE STREET ON SS? WHAT WAS ON THE STREET? 14a

3400 Living and working places - "stores, buildings"
3401 Street objects - "signs, hydrant"
3402 Activity areas - "stairs, playground"
3403 Other

35. DID YOU THINK IT COULD BE A REAL STREET? 14b

3500 Yes
3501 No
3502 Don't know/don't remember
3503 Sort of

36. WHY? /WHY NOT? 14b

3600 Setting - "too clean"
3601 Psychological - "people too nice"
3602 Activities - "kids were playing"
3603 Characters - "muppets on street"
3604 Just TV -
3605 "Seemed real"
3606 Qualified yes/no

37. DID YOU THINK THE PEOPLE WERE TRUE TO LIFE? 15

3700 Yes
3701 No
3702 Don't remember

38. WHY? /WHY NOT? 15

3800 Physical - "looked real"
3801 Psychological - "were nice"
3802 Activities - "were always teaching"
3803 Just TV
3804 "Seemed real"
3805 Qualified yes or no

39. DID YOU THINK LIFE ON SS WAS REAL? 16

3900 Yes
3901 No
3902 Sort of
3903 Don't know

40. WHY? / WHY NOT? 16

4001 Setting
4002 Psychological
4003 Activity
4004 Characters
4005 Qualified
4006 Just TV
4007 "Seemed real"

41. DID THE SHOW TEACH YOU ANYTHING ABOUT PEOPLE? 17

4100 Yes
4101 No

42. WHAT? 17

4200 Affective " be nice, OK to cry " "friendly, grouchy"
4201 Behavioral " not to hit, to share "
4202 Other

43. WERE SOME PARTS TOO FAST...? 18a

4300 Yes
4301 No
4302 Don't know

44. WHAT WERE THEY? 18a

44000 Reference to skill " alpha, numbers "
4401 Reference to segment

45. WERE SOME PARTS TOO SLOW? 18b

4500 Yes
4501 No
4502 Don't know

46. WHAT WERE THEY? 18b

4600 Reference to skill
4601 Reference to segment
4602 Format - "songs, animals, Spanish, cartoons"
4603 Don't know
4604 Repetition of segments

47. DID YOUR PARENTS TELL YOU ANYTHING ABOUT SS? 19a

4700 Yes
4701 No

48. WHAT DID THEY SAY? 19a

4800 Encouraged
4801 Can't remember
4802 Other

49. DID ANYONE WATCH WITH YOU? 19b

4900 No one
4901 Mother
4902 Father
4903 Siblings
4904 Grandparents
4905 Cousins
4906 Friends
4907 Other
4908 Parents

50. DIFFERENCE BETWEEN SS & MR. R? 20b

5000 Quality - "it was better"
5001 Set - "the train"
5002 Characters - "no muppets"
5003 Academic - "also taught"
5004 Activities - "took off shoes"
5005 Sense of Realness
5006 Other
5007 No difference
5008 Forget

51. DIFFERENCE BETWEEN SS & CAPTAIN K? 20b

5100 Quality
5101 Set
5102 Characters
5103 Academic
5104 Activities
5105 Sense of Realness
5106 Other
5107 No difference
5108 Forget

52. DIFFERENCE BETWEEN SS & CARTOONS? 20 b

5200 Quality
5201 Set
5202 Characters
5203 Academic
5204 Activities
5205 Sense of Realness
5206 Other
5207 No difference
5208 Forget

53. DID SS HELP PREPARE YOU FOR SCHOOL? 21

5300 Sort of
5301 Taught me alpha
5302 Taught me numbers
5303 Taught me Spanish
5304 Taught me spelling
5305 Taught me addition
5306 Prosocial
5307 Specific segment
5308 Other

54. HOW OLD WHEN STOPPED WATCHING? (Used oldest age mentioned) 22a

5400 5 - k (corresponding grade at school)
5401 6 - 1 " " " "
5402 7 - 2 " " " "
5403 8 - 3 " " " "
5404 9 - 4 " " " "
5405 10 - 5 " " " "
5406 Other

55. DID YOU EVER WATCH IT AGAIN? 22b

5501 Yes
5502 No

56. WHAT DID YOU THINK OF SS AT THIS LATER TIME? 22c

5600 For little kids - "can tell it's fake"
5601 Still good
5602 Knew everything
5603 Affect -- "funny, boring"
5604 Different - "new muppets"
5605 Same
5606 Other

57. DO YOU HAVE YOUNGER BROTHERS OR SISTERS? COUSINS? 23a

5700 Yes
5701 No

58. DO THEY EVER WATCH SS? 23b

5800 Yes
5801 No

59. DO YOU EVER WATCH WITH THEM? 60. WHAT DO YOU TALK ABOUT? 23 c, d

5900 Yes
5901 No

6000 Segments
6001 Encourage Learning
6002 Explain/Teach
6003 Characters
6004 Other
6005 Nothing

CHARACTER AND STREET LIST:

1. Bert
2. Ernie
3. Bert & Ernie
4. Oscar
5. Cookie
6. Grover
7. Kermit
8. Count
9. Roosevelt Franklin
10. Sherlock Hemlock
11. Harry
12. Snuffle
13. Mr. Hooper
14. Susan
15. Bob
16. David
17. Maria
18. Luis
19. Gordon
20. Olivia
21. Buffy
22. Linda
23. Inaccurate
24. Anonymous
25. Deaf
26. Crutches
27. Wheelchair

LIVING AND WORKING PLACES

28. Hooper's store
29. Fixit shop
30. Oscar's can
31. Big Bird's nest
32. Buildings
33. Apartments
34. Stores

ACTIVITY AREAS

35. Tire swing
36. Stairs
37. Alley
38. Sidewalk
39. Playground
40. Fruit cart
41. Slide

STREET OBJECTS

42. Bus stop
43. Mail box
44. Street signs
45. Hydrant
46. Fire-escape
47. Lamp-post
48. Tree
49. Basketball net
50. Fences
51. Bricks/cement
52. Boxes
53. Address 123
54. Newspaper stand
55. Trash barrels
56. Kids
57. No cars
58. Clean

MISCELLANEOUS

59. Other
60. Sally
61. Big Bird
90. Can't remember
91. Yes, but can't remember name